



PATRICIA S. PLOEHN, LCSW
Director

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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December 5, 2006

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

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Patricia S. Ploehn
From: Patricia S. Ploehn, LCSW
Director

DECEMBER 6, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #16 RE: MISSING CHILDREN MONTHLY UPDATE

On December 6, 2005, your Board directed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to reconvene the Missing Children Task Force in order to continue in the identification and refinement of practices for the prevention and recovery of runaways; and to report back on a monthly basis with status updates on the following:

- I. Existing Countywide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide;
- II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Website;
- III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways;
- IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3), and;
- V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.

CURRENT STATUS

- I. **Existing County-wide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide:**

This Department division continues to document specific information on the runaway population for use in regionally based Team Decision-Making (TDM) conferences. A follow-up report will be made to your Board upon any changes regarding this practice.

II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Web site:

The ARKs website continues to be maintained in accordance with existing protocol, policy and procedure. At the onset of reporting to the Board the Department had major challenges to contend with, including the clean-up and regular maintenance of the website. Currently we have implemented practices, which continue to ensure consistent and appropriate input of information via the use of ARKs liaisons. Additionally, the Department conducted a mass training for personnel tasked with data entry and for "experts" tasked with the assistance of data entry.

III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways:

The Hotline now regularly interfaces with local law enforcement jurisdictions when Runaway reports are made. As detailed in past reports to the Board, Hotline personnel have been trained on asking specific questions when dealing with Runaway youth. Staff also have access to a broader array of resources, which may assist both youth and caregivers. Finally, the Law Enforcement sub-committee continues to work on forwarding additional strategies, which will strengthen ties between the Hotline, regional offices and law enforcement agencies.

IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3):

As outlined in the March 1, 2006 Board report, all runaways are now referred to P-3 staff. A follow-up report will be made to your Board upon any changes regarding this initiative.

V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.

The Youth sub-committee continues to provide feedback for the resource directory that, once sanctioned, will be circulated to youth and caregivers. Additionally, both the Emancipation and the Public Affairs divisions regularly provide information on events, resources, activities, etc., which impact youth. Both divisions also put a great deal of effort in making their respective sites accessible and user friendly to the youth we serve.

CONCLUSION

The Department has been reporting on its runaway youth as resolved by the Board for a year, as was the commitment. At this time, systemic changes have been made which allow the department to accurately count its runaways, plan for enhanced service delivery options, and forge strategic and collaborative community and stakeholder alliances.

The Department's runaway count at the onset of this reporting commitment, which began again in January 2006, was 505. Midway through our reporting time frame the number of runaways was at 450. Presently, the count is 416. The average number of runaways for this year is 431.

As stated in past year's reports to the Board we have conducted significant analysis regarding this population. The results, including substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health challenges make the case for enhancing existing resources and soliciting specific resources. We have begun some of this work out of our Out-of-Home Care Division. We have also dedicated P-3 staff from the onset and the Director has dedicated a manager to this population as agreed upon. This individual is aligned with the Homeless Program as both populations have comparable challenges.

This report concludes the year-long reporting obligation to the Board. However, we remain committed to accessing and devising and reporting on strategies, which will further reduce the runaway population.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact me, or your staff may contact Armand Montiel, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

PSP:AS:cm

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

Abducted & Runaway Foster Childrens System (ARKS)
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON RUNAWAY CHILDREN SERVICED BY DCFS

December 4, 2006

Category	Totals / Subtotal	Percent	Comments
Runaway DCFS Foster Children as reported in ARKS System	416		
Age			
0-9 years old	0	0%	
10-13 years old	15	4%	
14-17 years old	401	96%	Majority are teenagers 14-17
	416		
Gender			
Female	296	71%	More girls than boys runaway
Male	120	29%	
	416		
Ethnicity			
American Indian	3	1%	
Black	121	29%	
Asian/Pacific Islander	13	3%	
Hispanic/Latino	221	53%	
White	58	14%	
	416		
Placement Type			
Foster Home	179	43%	
Group Home	149	36%	
Relative/Guardian Home	79	19%	
(Not Indicated)	9	2%	
	416		
Location of CSW			
SPA 1 Lancaster	15	4%	
SPA 1 Palmdale	26	6%	
SPA 2 North Hollywood	25	6%	
SPA 2 Santa Clarita	19	5%	
SPA 3 El Monte	1	0%	
SPA 3 Glendora	33	8%	
SPA 3 Pasadena	14	3%	
SPA 3 Pomona	16	4%	
SPA 4 Metro North	42	10%	
SPA 5 West Los Angeles	15	4%	
SPA 6 Century	23	8%	
SPA 6 Compton	14	3%	
SPA 6 Hawthorne	8	2%	
SPA 6 Wateridge	38	9%	
SPA 7 Belvedere	34	8%	
SPA 7 Santa Fe Springs	31	7%	
SPA 8 Lakewood	30	7%	
SPA 8 Torrance	15	4%	
Adoptions	4	1%	
Specialized Programs	8	2%	
(Not Indicated)	5	1%	
	416		